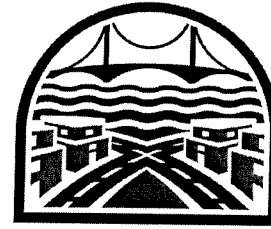




MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION



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Michigan municipalities offer telephone companies “Open for Business” invitation to enter local cable TV market

LANSING — More than two dozen mayors, supervisors and other local elected officials from cities, villages, and townships across Michigan today invited AT&T and Verizon to provide more cable television service in their communities during a press conference in the state Capitol Rotunda.

The event kicks off a statewide effort by municipalities, and locally elected officials, to protect the rights of families and businesses to have essential video and broadband services. In recently introduced legislation, House Bill 5895 and Senate Bill 1157, AT&T is saying they want the right to deny new cable services to some families and businesses in local communities.

The statewide effort is aimed at preventing AT&T (formerly SBC Communications), and other phone companies, from eliminating local franchise agreements that guarantee investment promises are kept, discrimination does not occur, and local community protection measures are enforced.

“Fair competition makes sense for everyone, not just a select few,” said Grand Blanc Mayor Michael Matheny, who is president of the Michigan Municipal League.

“Michigan communities welcome AT&T in to the video service marketplace and we are open for business,” Matheny added. “They do not face any barriers to enter the market because of local franchise requirements. If they agree to compete under the same rules that apply to everybody else to protect public safety and prevent discrimination, they can begin to roll out their service in a matter of days.”

“Local communities believe all residents matter, and local officials are not going to let some big phone companies say they don’t. We’re fighting for the right of all of our local residents to receive more cable services”, said Farmington Hills Mayor Vicki Barnett.

In addition to Matheny, the list of city leaders who extended the invitations to the telephone companies included: MML Vice President Clara Shepard of the **Muskegon** City Council; Kathleen Buckner, Mayor Pro Tem of **Center Line**; **Durand** Council Member Deborah Doyle; **Detroit** Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick; **Bridgman** Commissioner Linda Gedeon-Kuhn; Florence Schrader, the treasurer of **Uby**; **Wakefield** City Manager John Siira; **Gaylord** Mayor Gladys Solokis; **Coldwater** City Manager Bill

MORE

Local officials seek to boost competition, protect consumers in cable TV, broadband service
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Stewart, City Manager; **Midland** City Manger Karl Tomion; **Iron Mountain** Mayor Kenneth Tousignant; Gary Tuzinowski of the **Algonac** Council; and **Wayne** City Manager John Zech

The township leaders who extended the invitations to the phone companies included: Blackman Township Supervisor Ray Snell and Spring Arbor Township Clerk Randi Holthouse, both of **Jackson County**; Kalamazoo Township Supervisor Gary Cramer of **Kalamazoo County**; Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Ruth Ann Jamnick of **Washtenaw County**; Delhi Township Trustee John Hayhoe of **Ingham County**; and Redford Township Supervisor Miles Handy of **Wayne County**.

More than 120 communities throughout the state — ranging from **Eastpointe, Canton Township**, and **West Bloomfield** in southeast Michigan to **Jackson** in southern Michigan, **St. Joseph, Grand Rapids**, and **Ada Township** in west Michigan to Emmett County's **Little Traverse Township** and Roscommon County's **Roscommon Township** in northern Michigan — have approved resolutions calling for telephone companies to obtain local franchise agreements before offering cable television service to consumers.

The Detroit City Council, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, and the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus also have unanimously approved resolutions urging lawmakers to reject any legislation that would discriminate against cable TV consumers, interfere with local economic development efforts or reduce franchise fees cable providers pay to local municipalities.

"Local government must be a part of the cable franchising process to ensure all residents receive equitable service," said David Bertram, spokesman for the Michigan Townships Association. "Our local businesses and neighbors lose if the state eliminates local control."

"Without local control, cable providers will be unaccountable to the communities they are supposed to serve," Bertram added. "Franchise pacts level the playing field so that all companies play by the same rules. Michigan does not need a new layer of bureaucracy in Lansing to regulate a problem that does not exist."

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